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INCREASED INCIDENCE OF HEART ATTACKS IN NONSMOKING WOMEN MARRIED TO SMOKERS.

To investigate the incidence of heart attacks in never-smoking women exposed to environmental tobacco smoke, the authors analyzed data collected from 18,344 parents (9,172 spouse pairs) of Utah high school students. Each parent had been asked to report on his or her own health history, including the occurrence and age of onset of a heart attack, stroke, coronary bypass surgery, hypertension, diabetes, and cancer. All never-smoking women ($N = 7,115$) who were between the ages of 30 and 59 and for whom there was information on the husband's smoking status were included in the current study. There were 941 women married to current smokers, 950 women married to former smokers, and 5214 women married to never-smokers. A total of 23 heart attacks were reported by these women. Compared to women married to never-smokers, the women married to current smokers were 4.4 ($p < .01$) times as likely to have had a heart attack. When a proportional hazards model was used to control for other known risk factors (family history of CHD, hypertension, diabetes, weight, alcohol intake, and amount of exercise) the relative risk was still 3.4 ($p < .01$). There seemed to be an increased risk with an increased length of exposure; women married to former smokers had less of an increased risk ($RR = 1.9$) than women married to current smokers ($RR = 4.4$). These results suggest that women married to smokers have an increased risk of heart attacks as a result of exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.

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